

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PFOR, XF, NATO, US, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN PRESS COMMENT ON MIDDLE EAST, NATO AND US-
EUROPEAN RELATIONS

1 SUMMARY. BELGIAN PRESS EDITORIALS REFLECT DISAPPOINTMENT IN
AND CRITICISM OF THE U.S. FOR ALERTING ARMED FORCES WITHOUT CON-
SULTING NATO ALLIES AND FOR COMMENTING PUBLICLY ON EUROPEAN
ATTITUDES. AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT NEWSPAPERS
POINT OUT THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING NATO DEFENSES AND WARN
AGAINST THE DANGERS OF THEORIES ABOUT DISMANTLING NATO.
TWO PARTICULARLY CRITICAL EDITORIALS -- IN CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC
LA LIBRE BELGIQUE AND LE PEUOLE, OFFICIAL SOCIALIST ORGAN ""
DESCRIBE REMARKS OF SENIOR US OFFICIALS AS EITHER ARROGANT OR
BRUTAL AND BOT RELECT RESENTMENT AT US REACTION TO EUROPEAN
REFUSAL TO PERMIT THEIR TERRITORIES TO BE USED FOR SHIPMENT
OF ARMS TO ISRAEL, CRITICIZING PARTICULARLY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S
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"THREAT" CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF U.S. TROOPS IN

EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

2. "LE LIBRE BELGIQUE" EDITORIAL OF OCTOBER 29, ENTITLED "MALAISE WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE", CONCLUDES WITH THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES:

A) " ONE SEES THAT, IF THE CRISIS OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROVES THAT THE ENTENTE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON IS FAR FROM BEING PERFECT, IT ALSO DEMONSTRATES IN A MORE SPECTACULAR MANNER THAT WHICH HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR SOME TIME:
AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS NO LONGER HAVE THE SAME CONCEPTION OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND THE EUROPEAN ALLIES MUST THEREFORE BE REDEFINED.

B) " IN THE ISRAELI- ARAB WAR, EUROPE WAS CAREFUL TO OBSERVE AN ATTITUDE OF NEUTRALITY THAT APPARENTLY DID NOT COINCIDE WITH THE AMERICAN POLICY OF DIRECT SUPPORT TO ISRAEL. MOREOVER, IN THIS CONFLICT THE AMERICANS CONDUCTED, WITH THE RUSSIANS, A GREAT POWER POLICY THAT COMPLETELY NEGLECTED THE EUROPEAN PARTNER.

C) "THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL CERTAINLY MAKE THE INTER-ATLANTIC DIALOGUE MORE DIFFICULT. BUT IT SHOWED THAT THIS DIALOGUE WAS, MORE THAN EVER, NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT DIFFERENT RELATIONS, MORE BALANCED AND FINALLY MORE PROFITABLE."

3. AN ESPECIALLY SHRILL EDITORIAL, ENTITLED " CRITICISM AND BLACKMAIL", APPEARED IN THE OCTOBER 30 EDITION OF "LE PEUPLE" AND INCLUDES THE CHARGE THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD DRAMATIZED THE CRISIS FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS. PASSAGE ON US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS AND NATO FOLLOW:

A) " IT IS CLEAR THAT THE USA EXPECTS FROM EUROPE A KIND OF AUTOMATIC SOLIDARITY, AS IF AMERICAN POLICY, AMERICAN STRATEGY AND AMERICAN INTERESTS NECESSARILY COINCIDED WITH THE SUPREME WELL-BEING OF THE "WEST". IN SUM, THIS ROLE OF LEADER AND BEST JUDGE IS THAT WHICH THE RUSSIANS ARROGATE TO THEMSELVES WITHIN THE WARSAW BLOC. IT IS ALL THE MORE INTOLERABLE SINCE THE GEOGRAPHIC ZONE COVERED BY THE ATLANTIC TREATY IS CLEARLY CIRCUMSCRIBED. IT DOES NOT COVER THE MIDDLE EAST ANY MORE THAN THE FAR EAST OR LATIN AMERICA. IT DOES NOT COVER THE THIRD WORLD, ITS PROBLEMS, ITS CONTRADICTIONS, OR ITS EXPLOSIVE SITUATIONS.

B) " AND IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF OIL, OF EUROPE'S DEPENDENCE ON UNCLASSIFIED

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ENERGY SOURCES'. THE POLICY OF OUR COUNTRY TOWARDS ISRAEL WOULD BE CONTEMPTIBLE IF IT WERE DICTATED BY SUCH MATERIALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS. IT IS A MATTER OF WANTING FOR THE MIDDLE EAST A PEACE WITH JUSTICE FOR THE BEGIN UNDERLINE TWO END UNDERLINE PARTIES.

C) " AS FOR THE "THREAT OF MR. SCHLESINGER TO "REFLECT" ON THE MAINTENANCE OF US FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE, IT IS CLOSE TO VULGAR BLACKMAIL: THE REASONS FOR WHICH THE US MAINTAINS ITS

FORCES IN EUROPE ARE RELATED MUCH MORE TO THE "CREDIBILITY" OF AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE USSR THEN TO ALTRUISTIC FEELINGS TOWARD EUROPEANS AND THEIR BEAUTIFUL EYES. MOREOVER, THE POLITICAL WEIGHT OF THESE FORCES FOLLOWS FROM THEIR SIMPLE PRESENCE MORE THAN FROM THEIR NUMBER. THAT SAID, EUROPE WILL EXIST ONLY WHEN IT HAS THE MEANS TO DEFEND ITSELF ALONE."

4. THE INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE "GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN" SAW THE ALERT AND RESULTING CRISIS AS WARNING THAT "THE WEST MUST MAINTAIN ITS PREPAREDNESS, FOR ONCE AGAIN IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THE LANGUAGE OF STRENGTH IS THE ONLY ONE, UNFORTUNATELY, WHICH THE RUSSIANS UNDERSTAND. IT HAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED AGAIN HOW DANGEROUS ALL THE THEORIES ON THE "DISMANTLING" OF NATO ARE."

5. AN EDITORIAL IN THE SOCIALIST "VOLKSGAZET" SAID IT WAS A "SCANDAL THAT NATO PARTNERS REFUSED TO GIVE TECHNICAL FACILITIES TO THE U.S. TRANSPORT PLANES HEADING FOR ISRAEL."

6. INDEPENDENT "LE SOIR'S" EASTERN EUROPEAN EXPERT, POL MATHIL, COMMENTED THAT "THE CONCLUSION OF THE ALERT OF OCTOBER 25 IS OBVIOUS: THE NEAR EAST WILL NOT BE A NEW VIETNAM. BUT WILL IT BE ANOTHER CUBA?"

7. LIBERAL "LA DERNIERE HEURE" APPROVED THE U.S. ALERT; "MR. NIXON AND HIS COLLEAGUES CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO SHOW DETERMINATION BECAUSE THE USSR -- IN SPITE OF ALL OFFICIAL DENIALS -- WAS DEFINITELY PREPARING TO INTERVENE MILITARILY "ALWAYS TO PROTECT THE PEACE"... JUST AS IN PRAGUE AND BUDAPEST." THE EDITORIAL WONDERED, NEVERTHELESS, IF EUROPE SHOULD LET THE U.S. BE "SOLE JUDGZ OF OUR INTERESTS AND OF OUR RISKS." STRAUZ-HUPE

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